8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

609 It finds a formula for them that gives them a
123 familiar ring. So, the anthropologist gradually found acceptance. Even his formidable title grew easier as its translation spread. The Irish today
[212] are a very literate people. And a sudden increase in the circulation of books on anthropology
[217] from the county library helped very quickly to establish the anthropologist as 'looking for old customs'.

Once, perhaps, the translation would have been
121 adequate. But anthropology today is much more than a search for ancient custom. Even in Ireland, where the traditional Celtic life still lingers on, the anthropologist must conceive his purpose in broader terms. I want to devote this first lecture to the new purpose and its application to the Irish scene. In the remaining five lectures I shall try to present to you certain of the factors of custom and belief in the countryside of the south and west of Ireland and to analyse them in terms of the purpose we discuss here.

000 First of all we must clear up the matter of presumption. It may seem presumptuous that an anthropologist should profess to discuss the life of a modern nation. To some of us it may seem something like an engineer or a physicist, who deserts his field for metaphysics and morals. To others it may seem to betray a rather derogatory attitude toward the nation discussed. But neither desertion nor derogation can rightfully be charged. Our con-

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1394
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

In 1891 there were only nine holdings, with a rating of over £4 423
to £10, ninety-six with ratings between £2 and £4, and thirty-six at, 311
or under, £2. [435]

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—All the inhabitants (with 191
the exception of a very few old people, most of whom live in Inish-
shark) now speak English, but their vocabulary does not seem to be
very extensive. To a very large extent they speak Irish among them-
selves, but many of the children and young people have little or no
acquaintance with the language. Irish is most spoken in Inishshark,
which is less in communication with the outer world than Inish-
bofin.

It is much to be regretted that, as no return of the Irish-speaking
districts by parishes is made by the census authorities, the proportion
of those speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, cannot be
given here.

Illiteracy.—The population of the parish of Inishbofin of five years 212
of age and upwards was, in 1891, 895, of whom 415, or 46·4 per cent. 162
were illiterate :—

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	895	457	438
Illiterate, . . .	415	202	213
Percentage, . .	46·4	44·2	48·6

Of the 480 who could read, 348 persons, 188 males, and 160
females could read and write, the remaining 132, 67 males, and 65
females, or more than a quarter of the whole, could read only. The
rate of illiteracy is higher, as might be expected, among the females
than the males, and probably is greater in Inishshark than Inish-
bofin.

(D.) *Longevity.*—Though the people do not seem to reach any very 145
great age, yet they may be said to be fairly long-lived. According to 162
the census of 1891 there were on the islands 27 persons, 10 males
and 17 females of over 75 years of age, of whom there were—

Aged 75 and under 80, 1 male and 3 females,
,, 80 ,, 85, 5 males and 14 females,
,, 85 ,, 90, 4 ,, 0 ,,

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

KNIGHT'S POPULATION TABLE—*continued.*

Population, &c.			Remarks.
Horses,	587	943	Or only one beast of burden nearly, to every two families. Major Bingham and a few others have some good horses. The general breed is small, but hardy.
Asses,	356		
Cows,		1967	This is more than one to each family.
Sheep,		2348	
Pigs,		919	
Ploughs,			At Major Bingham's, Rev. Mr. Dawson's, and Rev. Mr. Lyons's.
Carts,			Same.
Feather beds,		624	Or nearly one to every third family. The substitute—straw, rushes, or hair.
Blankets,		1838	
Men without shoes,		734	
Men, women, and children,		3156	Wanting clothes, or nearly one-third of the whole population.
Buying provisions,		751	In a year of great plenty, but after two of great scarcity.
Sick,		454	
Died (1831),		236	
Carriages (four-wheeled),		2	
Carriages (two-wheeled),		8	

(c.) *Language and Illiteracy—Language.*—I regret to be unable to give here the proportion of people speaking Irish alone, and Irish and English, as the census authorities make the return by baronies only. The great majority of the people are bi-lingual, speaking both Irish and English, employing Irish mainly when speaking among themselves, but there is some small proportion, especially among the older people, who speak no English. The inhabitants of Inishkea do not usually speak anything but Irish on their own islands, though having a fair knowledge of English; but many of the women on these islands have no knowledge of the last-named language. About Portacloy there are many who "have no English."

Illiteracy.—The return for this is given by parishes. In Kilmore, in 1891, there were 3590 persons of five years old and upwards; of these 2135 or 59·5 per. cent. were illiterate.

	Persons.	Male.	Female.
Number above 5 years,	3590	1811	1779
Illiterate,	2135	978	1157
Percentage,	59·5	54·0	65·0

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

visits ranging in length from one to seven weeks between 1961 and 1966 to complete our project. During the 19 months that we dwelled on the island, most of our research was directed toward documenting the contemporary culture of Inis Beag: its technological, economic, political, social, religious, esthetic, and recreational aspects. We also investigated informal and formal education and the personality traits created by it, reconstructed Inis Beag history of the past century by examining historical materials of many sorts and probing the memories of elderly respondents, and recorded cultural change in process.

The research techniques that we employed are standard ethnographic ones: the guided and open-ended interview, external and participant observation, collection of life histories, photography, and phonography. Two departures from methodological orthodoxy were our use, as projective devices, of literary works and a sixty-two-verse ballad that I composed. A dozen islanders of both sexes and three age groups read at our request three books portraying Inis Beag culture, and we recorded and analyzed their varied responses. My ballad, now embedded in the island folklore tradition, is based on a shipwreck and rescue off Inis Beag that we witnessed, and a series of incidents which ensued during the following months. Alterations made by local singers after it was completed and the reactions to it by the islanders gave us insights into Inis Beag culture and personality which would have been difficult to obtain under other circumstances of fieldwork. I must add that the ballad was a product of exuberant cultural involvement and the satisfactions of "creative endeavor." Its research implications were unanticipated.

The Inis Beag islanders qualify as folk people in almost every respect, according to anthropological definition (Lewis 1960:1): the population has maintained its stability for at least two hundred years; there is a strong bond between the peasants and their land, and agriculture provides them with the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, which includes as primary implements the digging stick, spade, and scythe; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people long have been exposed to urban influences, have borrowed cultural elements from other rural areas on the mainland, and have integrated them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under foreign rule for over three centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence and, at the same time, one of hostility toward the government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those in most other peasant groups are low death and illiteracy rates. The Irish shun the term peasant as applied to individuals or communities, for the same reason that elitists in developing countries eschew the term primitive as applied to traditional cultural forms found in societies incorporated into newly formed states. The causes of this attitude must be examined next.

During the past hundred years, Ireland has experienced a vigorous nativistic movement—provoked by seven centuries of English domination, linked with nationalism as the Irish sought to assert their independence, focused on the

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inis Beag

the major source of their livelihood; production is mainly for subsistence and is carried on with a simple technology, using the digging stick, spade, and scythe as primary implements; the island folk participate in a money economy, but barter still persists; a low standard of living prevails, and the birth rate is high; the family is of central importance, and marriage figures prominently as a provision of economic welfare; the island is integrated into the county and national governments and is subject to their laws; the people have long been exposed to urban influences and have borrowed cultural forms from other rural areas on the mainland, integrating them into a relatively stable system; and, finally, the experience of living under English rule for centuries has created in the islanders an attitude of dependence on—yet hostility toward—government which continues to this day. The only conditions in Inis Beag which run counter to those found in most other peasant communities are low death and illiteracy rates and bilateral, rather than unilineal, descent (although inheritance is patrilineal).

Inis Beag culture also characterizes people of nearby islands, and the traditions of the several together might be regarded as forming a subculture of the total Irish system. Many island customs are shared with rural peasants on the mainland (where numerous regional subcultures exist), and some are part of a broader European matrix. The island has experienced considerable cultural change since the establishment of the Congested Districts Board (forerunner of the Gaeltacht) in 1891 and the growth of tourism in this century. But conditions there still approximate those which must have prevailed two generations ago, and earlier, throughout this region of peasant Ireland.

Inis Beag has a population of approximately 350 persons living in seventy-one "cottages" distributed among four settlements, called "villages." Bordering a "strand" and a large tract of common land on the northeastern side of the island are a series of limestone terraces, separated by water-bearing shales and faced by small cliffs, on which the villages are situated. Most of the arable land is found on this side, where the shales have been broken down by weathering and alien soils deposited by wind and by ice of the Weichsel glacier. Over many generations, the islanders have deepened these soils and created new soils on rock surfaces by adding seaweed, sand, and human manure. On the southwestern side of Inis Beag, known as the "back of the island," limestone pavements slope rather evenly, almost as the gentle dip of the strata, from the crest of the highest terrace to the sea a mile away. The bared surfaces are intersected in all directions by crevices,